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ARGENTINA

Anti-terrorist Campaign

The death of Argentine guerrilla leader Roberto Santucho and six of his comrades has dealt a serious blow to the People's Revolutionary Army, the terrorist group that the military has been pursuing for more than a year.

The cadre of terrorists that remains, however, will probably continue its indiscriminate violence.

Santucho, along with one of his chief lieutenants, was killed Monday when army troops stormed a hideout near Buenos Aires. The other five terrorists were killed in a later operation. Earlier this month, another leader was killed in a similar raid.

Several months ago, captured documents revealed that the organization was in deep trouble. At that time, 240 members had been killed by government forces and 800 were in prison. The organization's treasury, once estimated in the millions of dollars, was said to have dwindled to about $100,000.

The other major guerrilla organization, the Montoneros, has suffered comparatively little damage during the army's counterterrorist campaign. Security forces have confiscated a large quantity of weapons, but the organization remains viable, well-armed, and committed.

The serious reverses suffered by the People's Revolutionary Army may force the remnants of the group to link up with the Montoneros, advocates of a broad-based "National Liberation Front." Past efforts to create such an alliance have failed.

The government badly needed a success against the insurgents both to mollify right-wing critics within the military and to demonstrate to the Argentine people that it can handle the terrorist problem.

There are signs that Argentines are fed up with the terrorists and are beginning to inform police about suspected terrorists and hideouts. Santucho's death should encourage further cooperation and increase the momentum of the government's campaign against all terrorists.

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